

SOUTHERN COLUMBIA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
800 SOUTHERN DRIVE
CATAWISSA, PA 17820

The November 10, 2008, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:34 p.m. with President Michael Yeager in charge of the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

President Yeager welcomed everyone, followed by a roll call of Board Members.

BOARD MEMBERS

Timothy Benner

Charles Porter

Thomas Slusser (*Absent*)

Paul Starr

Richard Steele

David Stellfox

Timothy Vought

Michael Yeager

John Yocum

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles Reh, Superintendent; Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Joseph Shirvinski, Roger Nunkester, James Becker, Robert Mehalick and Barbara Lombardo (*Arrived 8:10 p.m.*), Administrators; district residents and members of the media.

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

President Yeager announced the Board met in executive session two weeks ago to discuss personnel matters and another executive session would be held following the meeting to discuss negotiations. He announced that Fiscal Items C through K with the elimination of Item D would be action items along with all Personnel Items and Policy and Programs Item A.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

1.) The Pennsylvania Department of Education has officially announced that all three Southern Columbia District schools have earned the Keystone Achievement Award for meeting Adequate Yearly Progress for the second consecutive year. Southern Columbia is one of only two districts in IU 16 where all schools within the district have met Adequate Yearly Progress.

2.) He referred to the flyer that was handed out to Board members and district residents and noted that some of the facts are not accurate. He pointed out that the flyer states that the Bloomsburg School District, which uses a for-profit contractor, had to pay over \$200,000 in extra fuel costs. Mr. Reh personally contacted Mr. Kelly, Bloomsburg School District's Superintendent, who confirmed that Bloomsburg School District paid \$9,566 in fuel surcharges for the 2007-2008 school year. It is too early to calculate what it will cost for 2008-2009, but fuel prices have stabilized and decreased. Another statement indicates that the district would lose state funding if they would choose to use a contractor. The district would in fact still receive state funds and that money would be used to pay the contractor. The flyer indicates that the district would lose control of the buses and would not have control over who interacts with the students. The school district retains the right to approve all drivers or employees of the contractor working within the district. Another issue was safety. Mr. Reh stated that if there was the slightest doubt of safety for the children, he and the Board of Directors would not even consider contracting out transportation services. Southern is the only district in the area that does not contract out and all

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of the other districts are very comfortable with and confident in their contractors. Mr. Reh stated that when he assumed the position of Superintendent, his responsibility is to be fiscally sound and evaluate the programs of the district and make recommendations to Board members. As the only district in the area that does not contract out, he felt that this would be the time for the Board to evaluate and do a cost analysis of either maintaining the buses or contracting out. He noted that all of this would take place during negotiations. He pointed out that the public should be informed and he asked that if anyone is going to hand out flyers, they should have accurate information.

3.) Mr. Becker announced that two senior students would be added to the 700 Club. Keenan Barrant achieved over 700 in the Critical Reading portion of the SAT and Thomas Yeager achieved over 700 in Verbal and over 700 in Math. President Yeager congratulated both students on behalf of the Board.

4.) Mr. Mehalick reported that the Special Education Department would be hosting a Parent Transition Clinic the following evening at 7:00 p.m. in the high school library. The clinic is for parents of students who will be transitioning from early intervention or preschool programs into school age or students who will be graduating within the next two years.

5.) Mr. Mehalick announced that the 2nd Annual Senior Citizens Dinner would be held December 16th.

6.) Mr. Shirvinski reported that the Hartman Harvest Festival was held October 30th in the Elementary Center. Students brought in non-perishable food items to donate to a local food bank. Nearly 400 pounds of food were collected.

7.) Mr. Becker stated that the School Reach system really works well. He made a call to parents over the weekend to remind them of the parent/teacher conferences and the turnout of parents increased considerably from previous years.

Mr. Porter asked Mr. Becker to provide an update on the Driver Education program. Mr. Becker agreed to provide a report in the Friday Letter.

President Yeager asked Mr. Becker to provide some information regarding the photograph of Ralph Beishline that had recently appeared in the newspaper. Mr. Becker explained that “pre-SATs” are offered to sophomores. Ralph Beishline was named a candidate for the National Merit Scholar award due to his score on the PSAT. He just missed being named a National Merit Scholar by a narrow margin.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - The meeting was cancelled, but the committee will meet on Thursday at 6:00 p.m. in the high school conference room with several of the fall sports coaches.

Facilities & Services – Tim Vought reported that the shelter to the lower fields was completed except for putting stone down. The Lowe’s project is moving forward, the brick should be laid in the very near future. The preventative maintenance program information was put into a spreadsheet by Mr. Geffken to make it easier to work with. The Priority Project List was discussed. The plumbing upgrades to the elementary school will be done during Christmas vacation. The grinder in the sewage treatment plant will be replaced. Mr. Rodgers stated that he is awaiting approval from PDE because of the urgent need. The committee also discussed the possibility of contracting out for field maintenance services.

Finance - Charlie Porter, Chairperson reported that the committee talked about the proposed building project. They asked the architect who performed the feasibility study to submit a written proposal. A requirement under the Request for Proposals for Transportation Services was that any company that planned to submit a proposal had to attend a mandatory pre-proposal meeting. Four

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companies were in attendance. Three bids were received. Two bids were received on time and one bid was received via Fed-Ex, but it was a few minutes late. Mr. Rodgers is awaiting direction from Attorney Carl Beard. Solicitor Roberts stated that this is not a bidding situation, and he is predicting that Mr. Beard will allow the district to accept the proposal. Mr. Porter stated that the Board has asked counsel how to proceed in this situation to comply with the Sunshine Law and complying with the Public Records Act. The committee discussed substitute pay rates and disposal of the used buses. Both items are action items on the agenda. Mr. Vought brought before the committee information pertaining to companies that will pay if a facility shuts down or curtails its use of electricity during certain intervals throughout the day. The committee instructed the Business Manager to look into the matter. There is still no word on the Energy Harvest Grant. There are software programs available that could assist the district in making feasible changes for energy efficiency even if the grant is not received.

CSIU - Mr. Porter stated that no meeting was held since his last report.

Vo-Tech – The Joint Operating Committee will meet November 18th.

ITEMS – TREASURER’S REPORTS

ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

Mr. Yocum referred to the October 13, 2008, minutes and requested that Item #1 under the Superintendent’s Report be revised to clarify that the Requests for Proposals were for transportation services.

Mr. Porter asked for clarification on two checks issued to Potter Construction. Mr. Geffken explained that one of the checks was for a completed job for the curb work outside the elementary building and the second check was for a deposit to buy materials for the high school auditorium entrance project.

ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Stellfox and second by Starr, the following items were presented for approval:

- C. To award the bid for the disposal of (2) Lincoln Stick Welders to Paul Jankowski, Paxinos, PA, in the amount of \$140.00 (bid tabulations per Exhibit B).
- E. To award the bid for the disposal of a Metal Band Saw - Horizontal Floor Mount to Derek Stine, Catawissa, PA, in the amount of \$175.00 (**bid tabulations per Exhibit D**).
- F. To award the bid for the disposal of 10+ Gallons of Hillyard Gym Floor Finish to Geffken Timber Service, Benton, PA, in the amount of \$11.00 (**bid tabulations per Exhibit E**).
- G. To award the bid for the disposal of an EZ-GO 36-Volt Electric Golf Cart to Geffken Timber Service, Benton, PA, in the amount of \$176.00 (**bid tabulations per Exhibit F**).

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- H. To award the bid for the disposal of (2) Plastic Skylight Interior Domes to Geffken Timber Service, Benton, PA, in the amount of \$11.00 **(bid tabulations per Exhibit G)**.
- I. Motion to reject all bids pertaining to the following buses (bid tabulations per Exhibit H, I, J, K and L):
- 1996 International 72-passenger school bus
 - 1992 Bluebird 72-passenger school bus
 - 1992 Ford 72-passenger school bus
 - 1991 Bluebird 72-passenger school bus
 - 1990 Int'l 72-passenger school bus
- J. To award the sale of the following buses to Mathies & Sons, Inc., Slippery Rock, PA, for a total price of \$5,750:
- 1996 International 72-passenger school bus
 - 1992 Bluebird 72-passenger school bus
 - 1992 Ford 72-passenger school bus
 - 1990 Int'l 72-passenger school bus
- K. To award the sale of a 1991 Bluebird 72-passenger school bus to Tim Krise, Punxsutawney, PA, for a price of \$500.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Benner and second by Yocum, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. To accept the resignation of Debra Olson from the position of Accounting Staff for Payroll and Other Funds effective December 2, 2008. Mrs. Olson has been with the district since May 2001.
- B. Employment of Debra Olson effective December 5, 2008, on an intermittent basis, as necessary for the purpose of training her replacement, at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.
- C. A revised schedule of Substitute/Temporary Pay Rates (per Exhibit M).
- D. The addition of Christina Hess (Bus/Van Driver) to the 2008-2009 Substitute List effective November 11, 2008 (pending completion of all employment requirements).
- E. Employment of Dean Brewer as an After School Tutor effective November 11, 2008 at the contracted rate of \$21 per hour, which will come from proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant.
- F. Employment of Anthony Pecora as a Tutor for the District After School Tutoring Program effective November 11, 2008, at the contracted rate of \$21.

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The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Steele and second by Stellfox, the Articles of Agreement with Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

President Yeager asked Board members to review the goals that were sent with the Friday Letter. He requested that the Board meet in executive session following the next regular meeting to discuss the goals.

Mr. Porter stated that the Finance Committee discussed getting another estimate from Bond Counsel. He mentioned the possibility of checking with local banks. He noted that the district may be able to go with a higher interest rate from a bank in lieu of paying high bond fees through a bond company. Mr. Rodgers stated that he could put something together.

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident and bus driver, Susan Adam, asked why they don't get the transportation department running as efficiently as possible before looking at a contractor. She asked why the district hasn't purchased newer buses. Mr. Rodgers explained that \$135,000 is budgeted each year for new buses, but the last two years it has been the recommendation of the people who deal with the buses on a regular basis that the district meets certain needs. For example, last year it was necessary to purchase three 72-passenger buses, one 24-passenger and one 15 passenger just to meet the district's needs. Ideally, two new buses would be purchased each year, but the district has to meet its needs.

Mrs. Adam also asked about the computerized routing system required by the RFP. She stated that it was her understanding that the district purchased a routing system several years ago, but it was never used. She noted that the things that could be done to save money really haven't been looked into. Mr. Porter stated that he would have to disagree with her. He stated that in an effort to be fair to the bus drivers, the Board directed the administration to look into ways to make the transportation department as efficient as possible. He stated that they wanted to have a "level playing field." President Yeager noted that the contractors stated that they would interview every one of the district drivers. Mrs. Adam stated that the contractors don't offer benefits. President Yeager stated that the Board and administration are taking the drivers into consideration, but they must be fiscally responsible.

Solicitor Roberts noted that this discussion is premature. It should take place during negotiations. Mr. Stellfox stated that a lot of people think that this is a done deal. He emphasized that it is not a done deal and there are a lot of things to consider before a decision could be made.

Mr. Rodgers thanked Mrs. Olson for her service to the district in the Business Office. He noted that she did an outstanding job and she definitely will be missed. President Yeager asked Mr. Rodgers to thank her for coming back to help out until her replacement is trained.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Steele and second by Porter, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch, Board Secretary